

Year-End Report

**Nationwide Canadian
British Studies Essay Contest**

Sponsored by NACBS and British Council

Submitted by Robert Tittler, Contest Committee Chair

10 October 2002

The Inception of the Contest:

Negotiations between NACBS and the British Council for Canada conducted in the spring and early summer of 2001 produced an agreement to co-sponsor a nation-wide Canadian undergraduate essay contest in British Studies. For its part, British Council, represented by its Director, Mr. Peter Chenery, agreed to support for an initial two-year period the award of \$Can 100 to each of ten annual winners of the contest, and to seek corporate finance on the same terms thereafter. For its part, NACBS (represented by its then President, Prof. Linda Peck and by Robert Tittler) agreed to organize, advertise and adjudicate the contest itself.

In consequence, the first year's contest was announced at the beginning of the academic year 2001-2002, some 500 posters being distributed to universities and colleges nationwide for that purpose. With Prof. Peck's approval, Tittler established a committee of three Canadian members of NACBS (Dr. Deborah Gorham, Professor of History at Carleton University in Ottawa, and Dr. Lynn Wells, Assistant Professor of English at the University of Regina, in Saskatchewan, with himself as chair.) The contest was open to undergraduates in all fields which could be counted under the rubric of British Studies, with contestants chosen by faculty nomination.

The Results of the First Year:

By the nomination deadline of May 1st thirty-four nominations were received, from across the nation: from Brock, Concordia, Lethbridge, McGill, McMaster, Ottawa, Regina, St. Francis Xavier, St. Mary's, Saskatchewan, University College of Cape Breton, Victoria (BC), Waterloo, Western Ontario, and Windsor. Submissions came from four fields: History (18); English (14); Art History (1) Economics (1). Though most came from upper level courses, we were surprised to receive some submissions from first and second year courses as well. Lengths varied from 9 pages to 104 pages. Winners are listed in the attached sheet.

The committee determined four criteria on which to make its rankings: a) originality and creativity; (b) writing: structure and style; (c) content; and (d) documentation and persuasiveness. We assigned grades ranging from 1 ('good') to 5 ('extraordinary': virtually publishable), and averaged the results to arrive at the ten highest cumulative scores.

We have retained the same committee, and essentially the same system, with a few minor adjustments to take our collective experience into account, in the contest for the 2002-2003 academic year. Posters announcing this have now been distributed nationwide early in the autumn term.

Winners of the first North American Conference on British Studies/ British Council (Canadian) Undergraduate Essay Contest in British Studies, 2001-2002

Andrade, Debbie, 'Reading Three Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I', Department of Art History, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.

Bentley, Stephen C., 'In the Wake of Freedom', Labour, Capital and Empire in Rural Jamaica, 1838-1865', Department of History, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec.

Blouin-Gagne, Isabelle, 'Bloody Protest for a Glorious Thing? The Mind of Easter 1916', Department of History, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec.

Cohn, Sara, "Shakespeare's Richard III and his Early Sources", Department of History, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec.

Crawshaw, Tim, 'Oliver Cromwell, Life and Legacy', Department of History, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

Jacklin, Laurie, 'A Policeman's Lot is not a Happy One': Wage Labour Trade-off in the New Job of Policing in Victorian England', Department of History, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

King, Noelle, 'Home is Where the Heart is: The Ambiguities of Domestic Space in Great Expectations', Department of English, U. Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia.

Malecki, Jeffrey, 'Re-Writing History in Reverse: The Crisis of Linear Time in Time's Arrow', Department of English, U Waterloo, Waterloo, Ont..

Robertson, Jennifer, 'A Loose Thread Unraveled: British Propaganda and the Irish in the Civil War Years', Department of History, U. of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask.

Weir, Erin, 'Economic Theory and National Defense; the Impact of the Classical and Historical Schools on Economic Preparations for War in Britain and German During the 1930s', Department of Economics, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan.